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MONDAY
MARCH 15, 1954

I went to see Dirk Spierenburg this morning. He is agitated over the question now confronting the High Authority, namely whether to continue to fix maximum prices for coal or to free its sale entirely. He is strongly in favor of the latter but says Monnet is equally determined on the former.

I talked to Monnet later about this. His view is that if prices of coal were freed, new prices would in effect be fixed by the quasi-German monopoly Georgs and by the Charbonnages de France without the High Authority being able to exercise any influence over them. He is now engaged in negotiations with the Germans to break up their monopoly and is anxious to continue, at least on a temporary basis, the power in the High Authority to set prices. He says if he finds himself in a minority on this subject he will resign.

At this time and later in the day I took up with him the question of his trip to America in connection with the Coal and Steel investment loan. He has tentatively decided to go during the first week in April. Swatland and Guyot were present at our final interview and they will draw a contract within a few days representing the High Authority's views on how the first slice of the $100,000,000 should be contracted for.

I came down on the late evening train and arrived home after midnight.

I lunched today with Prime Minister and Madame Bech in company with our Minister, Wiley Buchanan, and his pretty wife. Dr. Bech was in tearing form, with his usual succession of good stories. He talked quite a lot about his activities as a collector. The Germans had looted his house of his great accumulation of procelain, but little by ~~little he has replaced a part of it~~ with items produced by 18th Century Luxembourg factories. The beautiful table service we used today had been bought by him at the ~~Hotel Drouot in Paris.~~

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He has set the EDC ratification debate for March 22 but fears interruptions of it which might postpone a final vote until the first week in April. He is confident it will pass by a large majority.

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